



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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ICE ARRESTS 5 DOMINICANS ON DRUG CHARGES

Organization recruited drug swallows to import heroin to Puerto Rico and New York

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents today arrested five Dominican nationals indicted by a federal Grand Jury on Aug. 3, 2005 for conspiracy to possess controlled substances with intent to distribute.

Jesus Rivera-Aguiar, Alberto de la Cruz, Jesus Aguiar, Candy Medina and Anny Surel, all citizens of the Dominican Republic, were arrested early this morning in the neighborhood of Santurce, Puerto Rico on drug charges in violation of Title 21, United States Code (USC), sections 841, 846, 853, 881, 952, 963 and Title 18, USC, section 1324.

The indictment alleges the defendants conspired to import heroin from the Dominican Republic into the United States for its further distribution at various drug points in Puerto Rico and New York for a significant financial gain.

In their conspiracy to import drugs to the United States through San Juan, Puerto Rico, the defendants and co-conspirators recruited couriers to travel to the Dominican Republic and smuggle heroin both internally (swallows) and externally. The indictment further alleges that the defendants administered tests to potential recruits by requiring candidates to swallow various objects to see if they would be able to swallow heroin “fingers”. Should the candidate pass the test, the organization would purchase a round trip ticket for the recruit to fly to the Dominican Republic and return to San Juan, Puerto Rico after having swallowed a quantity of heroin “fingers” or received heroin packaged by other means. Once in San Juan, they would either remain in Puerto Rico to “expel” the heroin or meet their contact person to receive the continuing airline ticket to New York.

Anny Suriel was also charged with alien smuggling for aiding and harboring undocumented migrants in her residence in Santurce, Puerto Rico.

“Importing controlled substances into the United States by swallowing the narcotics and by acting as a human carrier in order to avoid detection is no longer the route by which these criminal organizations can operate in the Caribbean Basin,” said Lydia St. John-Mellado, acting special

agent- in- charge of ICE investigations in Puerto Rico. “ICE will continue investigating and dismantling these organizations.”

The public is reminded a criminal complaint contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitle to a fair trial and the government has the burden of proving quilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.